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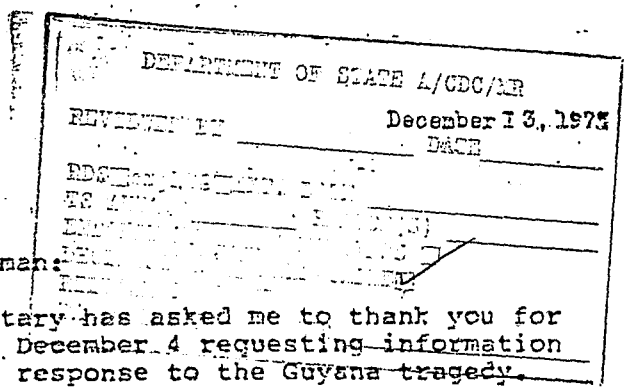

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Secretary has asked me to thank you for your letter of December 4 requesting information about the U.S. response to the Guyana tragedy.

On Sunday, November 19, it had become clear that the United States Government was facing a major crisis in Guyana. An American Congressman and other Americans in his party had been killed. A settlement believed to include over 1,000 Americans was involved, and its situation was uncertain. It was apparent that the Government of Guyana required assistance in handling a major emergency created by the presence of Americans within its borders.

The President, acting under his constitutional authority as Chief Executive and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, ordered the departments of our government to take action to deal with this emergency. The operational decisions within the U.S. Government in this unique situation were made by the Secretary of State in conjunction with some of his Cabinet colleagues.

Under the President's Executive authorities, medical evacuation for injured Americans was immediately ordered, and the United States Government offered assistance to the Government of Guyana to prevent further loss of life.

The Honorable
John Slack, Chairman,
Subcommittee on Departments
of State, Justice, Commerce, the
Judiciary and Related Agencies,
House of Representatives.

As events progressed, it became clear that there were large numbers of Americans dead. For a time, it was believed that there were survivors in the jungle; and the United States adjusted and increased its assistance to help the search by Guyana police and military. Finally, when the full scope of the tragedy of Jonestown was clear, our Government was requested by the Government of Guyana to remove the bodies. This operation was considered essential in handling the emergency situation which existed in Guyana at the time.

The Justice Department is fully exploring possible legal remedies which can be used to recover the cost the U.S. Government has incurred in removing and processing the bodies of Americans from Guyana. Now that the emergency is substantially over, the Office of Management and Budget and other agencies are reviewing the various operations to determine the exact cost to the United States Government. Although the costs to the United States Government of an effort of this magnitude obviously are considerable, they are substantially lower than the $8 million figure used in some press reports. Please be assured that we will report fully to appropriate congressional committees on these aspects of the operation upon completion of our review. Meanwhile, the Justice Department will make all efforts to recover the costs to the U. S. Government.

If you have any further questions, you may wish to contact Deputy Assistant Secretary John Bushnell in our Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, whose telephone number is 632-8562.

Sincerely,

DB/GW

Douglas J. Bennet, Jr.
Assistant Secretary for
Congressional Relations

Drafted: ARA/CAR:RZImmermann:lm
12/13/78 x 29447 # 180-1580
Clearances: Inter-Agency
ARA:GLister
ARA:JABushnell
H:ENef
EN/CN

5/S 7823540

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

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ACTION SLIP

Unclassified
(Attachment Classification)

S/S CONTROL NUMBER 7823540

ACTION ASSIGNED TO: NRA

DATE 12/9

(Action Office Instructions on Reverse)

ACTION REQUESTED

___ STATE TO NSC MEMO
___ STATE TO

___ with Draft reply for signature by _____
___ with Comment or Recommendation

___ DIRECT REPLY

___ REPLY FOR SIGNATURE BY H

___ provide info copy under cover of State-NSC transmittal form
___ provide comeback copy for _____

___ RECOMMENDATION FOR _____
___ with Memorandum for the President

___ APPROPRIATE HANDLING

___ FOR YOUR INFORMATION

DUE IN S/S BY:
CLEAR WITH:

REMARKS/SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

Congressional

___ S	___ UNA	___ A	___ SCA	
___ D	___ S/AB	___ OU	___ AF	
___ P	___ S/AR	___ EB	___ ARA	
___ E	___ S/MS	___ H	___ EA	
___ T	___ S/P	___ IGA	___ EUR	
___ M	___ S/PRS	___ INR	___ NEA	
___ C	___ S/CPR	___ IO	___ ACDA	
___ S/S	___ S/IG	___ L	___ AID	
___ S/S-O	___ S/IL	___ OES	___	
___ S/S-EX	___ S/NM	___ PA	___	
___ S/S-S	___ D/HA	___ PM	___	
___ TEAM A	___ D/IWY			
___ TEAM B	___ D/LOS			
___ TEAM C	___ M/CT			
___ TEAM D	___ M/DG			
___ S/S-I (RF)	___ M/EEO			
	___ M/MO			

FROM: Eileen Donnelly (NAME)

S/S-S:	A	B	C	D
	21522	28338	28348	28062

JOHN M. SLACK
3RD DISTRICT, WEST VIRGINIA

ROOM 1536
LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
PHONE: (202) 225-2711

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COMMITTEE:
APPROPRIATIONS

CHAIRMAN: SUBCOMMITTEE ON
DEPARTMENTS OF STATE, JUSTICE, COMMERCE, THE JUDICIARY AND RELATED AGENCIES

MEMBER: SUBCOMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC WORKS

MEMBER: SUBCOMMITTEE ON
TREASURY, POSTAL SERVICE AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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FADRC
DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

December 4, 1978

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ACTION
is assigned to
ARA

Honorable Cyrus R. Vance
Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C Street
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

According to published reports you, along with Defense Secretary Harold Brown, made the major decisions resulting in the mission by American military forces to recover and return to the United States the victims of the mass murder-suicide in Guyana. It is further reported that the Office of Management and Budget is "consulting with a number of Federal agencies to try to devise a formula for which ones should share in the cost of the operation."

I have had strong expressions of disapproval from my constituents about the manner in which the United States government inserted itself into this situation, and I am writing you, therefore, to request you advise me as to the justification which was relied upon to make possible the use of appropriated State Department funds. It appears to be established that the "People's Temple" cult owned assets in gold, securities and real estate amounting to perhaps $10 million or more. Can you advise me further as to what steps will be taken to secure a share of these assets for the Federal government to offset the multi-million-dollar cost of the mission to Guyana?

I will appreciate the favor of an early response.

Yours, sincerely,

John Slack, M.C.

JS:m

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